

September 6, 2007

**FOOD STAMP
Special Notice
07-14**

**CalWORKs
Special Notice
07-20**

**MEDI-CAL
Special Notice
07-06**

**CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
FOR IMMIGRANTS (CAPI)
Special Notice
07-03**

**GENERAL
RELIEF
Special Notice
07-02**

Subject **NEW FOOD STAMP COST- OF- LIVING ALLOTMENTS (COLA)
FOR FFY 2008 EFFECTIVE 10/01/07**

Effective Date Upon Receipt

Reference All County Information Notice (ACIN) NO. I-45-07

Purpose The purpose of this joint Special Notice is to:

- Inform staff that the Food Stamp COLA mass update process ran the weekend of September 2, 2007 for Food Stamps including PAFS, NAFS *and* TFS;
- Inform staff that the Food Stamp Program Guide (FSPG) **Handbook Chapter - 63-1100**, has been updated and will be posted shortly on the Intranet;
- Provide staff with instructions for COLA implementation; and
- Provide staff with CalWIN Mass Update Reports.

Background The Food Stamp Act of 1977 provides annual COLA adjustments to allotments, certain deductions, and eligibility standards. The adjustments are effective every year on the first day of October. If October falls mid-quarter in a QR household, the COLA is effective October 1st and is treated as a county-initiated mid-quarter change.

Subject **NEW FOOD STAMP COST- OF- LIVING ALLOTMENTS (COLA) FOR FFY 2008
EFFECTIVE 10/01/07**

**Summary of
Changes**

The following changes are part of the FFY 2008 COLA:

- The maximum allotments according to net income were increased;
- The Gross/Net Income Eligibility Standards have been increased;
- The Excess Shelter Deduction has been increased to \$431;
- The Standard Deduction Amount* increases according to Eligible Food Stamp Household (EFSHH) size as follows:
 - 4 Eligible HH members = \$143
 - 5 Eligible HH members = \$167
 - 6 or more Eligible HH members = \$191

*NOTE: There was no change in the Standard Deduction Amount for an EFSHH of 1 - 3 members (\$134) or in the Homeless Household Shelter Allowance (HHSAA) currently \$143.

Standard Utility Allowance (SUA)

The SUA amount is \$274 for FFY 2008, effective October 1, 2007.

Limited Utility Allowance (LUA)

The LUA amount is \$79 for FFY 2008, effective October 1, 2007. A household that is not eligible for the SUA but incurs expenses for at least two separate utilities other than heating and cooling is eligible for a LUA.

Telephone Utility Allowance (TUA)

The TUA amount is \$20 for FFY 2008, effective October 1, 2007. A household that is not eligible for the SUA or LUA, but incurs a telephone expense or in its absence an equivalent form of communication, is eligible to receive a telephone deduction.

**Maximum Food
Stamp
Allotments**

The 2007-2008 Food Stamp COLA will be effective October 1, 2007. Maximum Allotments will be as follows:

Maximum Food Stamp Allotments								
Household Size								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Each Additional Person
162	298	426	542	643	772	853	975	+122

Informing Notice	State regulations do not require timely notice when processing a mass change. However, we are required to inform clients that a change will or has occurred in their food stamp allotment. This informing requirement can be met by displaying posters containing the information, in places accessible to clients. Households must be informed by October 1, 2007.
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Samples of the COLA informing posters (Attachments A and B) are attached to this SN. FRCs will need to post the notification in their lobbies and other areas frequented by clients. These posters must be posted no later than October 1, 2007 and must remain on display until November 30, 2007.

**Food Stamp
Handbook
Chapter**

Revised Handbook Chapter

The FSPG Handbook Chapter 63-1100 has been updated and will be posted on the intranet. Staff will be informed when it is available in Food Stamp Program Guide Letter No. 534.

Forms Impact

The Assistance Standards Chart (Attachment C) has been updated to reflect the Food Stamp Program (FSP) COLA adjustments.

QR Impact

The Food Stamp COLAs are effective October 1, 2007 for Change and Quarterly Reporting (QR) Households. If October falls Mid-Quarter in a Quarterly Reporting Household, the COLA is effective October 1, 2007 and is treated as a county-initiated change.

Staff are reminded of the requirement to discontinue NAFS cases that exceed the gross income level (130 percent of the Federal Poverty Level), when a recipient voluntarily reports income above the gross income level.

**Transitional
Food Stamps**

Households receiving Transitional Food Stamps (TFS) will be entitled to this COLA.

**Automation
Impact**

The COLA mass update process ran the weekend of September 1st, 2007. Cases containing Food Stamps were included in the run. The run also updated the allotment for Transitional Food Stamp (TFS) cases that were automatically converted in CalWIN.

The batch AU Exception indicators listed below were lifted during the COLA process. Once the COLA was completed, the Batch AU indicators were restored.

Type of Special Indicator	
CA - (CAPI)	Batch AU Exception-CA
CW - (CalWORKs)	Batch AU Exception-CW
FS - (Food Stamps)	Batch AU Exception-FS
GA - (General Relief)	Batch AU Exception-GA
MC – (Medi-Cal)	Batch AU Exception-MC
RC – (RCA)	Batch AU Exception-RC

The Allotment Amount, Income Limit, Maximum Excess Shelter Cost Standard Deduction, and Utility Allowance Tables were updated in CalWIN Production on 8/20/2007. The October 2007 budget calculations for the impacted cases will reflect the increase in the allotment amount.

**CalWIN Mass
Update Reports**

To assist staff with case reviews, the following reports will be generated as a result of the COLA and accessible online in CalWIN via Management Reporting.

- MU0002R – Mass Update Detail
 - MU0003R – Mass Update Exception
 - MU0005R – Mass Update Summary
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**Cola
Supplemental
Reports**

The following reports will be distributed to the FRCs to further assist staff with case reviews. Every case on the “**ERROR WORKER DETAIL**” Report must be reviewed. Staff is required to review the EDBC results and manually authorize the cases as appropriate. The reports accompany this Special Notice.

- **ERROR WORKER DETAIL:** This report lists and describes errors encountered along with corresponding case number, case name, case status, program, and worker detail. Cases on this list have not been auto-authorized by CalWIN.
 - **CORRESPONDENCE DETAILS:** This report lists all the correspondence that was triggered during the COLA run on each case. **NOTE:** These correspondences were automatically mailed on September 6th, 2007.
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**Client
Correspondence**

CalWIN produced the standard change notice QR 377.4 to provide notification to households in which benefits changed due to changes other than the COLA. This notification was automatically mailed September 6th, 2007.

**Manual Budget
Calculations
Reminder to Staff**

Manual calculations done outside of CalWIN should be completed based on joint [FSPG Special Notice 06-13](#).

Staff may use the following methods to meet the documentation requirement;

- Scratch Budget
- Manually in the **County Use Section** at the bottom of the of the QR7
- CalWIN case comments (must show the actual calculation)
- Form QR30
- Form QR 285B
- Manual or computer calculations

When using the Scratch Budget, Forms QR 30, QR 285B and/or manual or computer calculations, staff must file these documents in the case file financial folder under income report tab.

**Medi-Cal, GR,
CAPI, and
CalWORKs
Impact**

Medi-Cal, GR, CAPI, and CalWORKs HSSs with Food Stamp associated programs must continue to review their alerts and communications for impacts.

Staff may receive phone calls on correspondence resulting from the COLA. If they do, they should review the NOAs that were generated from Client Correspondence to determine if they were issued appropriately.

HSS Actions

HSS's must use the lists provided with this Special Notice to determine if the COLA has been updated.

If the case has a discrepancy, the FS COLA was not applied to the case. Staff must take corrective action to fix the discrepancy and authorize the case in order for the COLA to be applied.

Staff should complete the COLA corrections as soon as administratively feasible.

**Quality
Assurance
(QA)/Quality
Control (QC)
Impact**

Effective with sample month of October 2007, both Quality Assurance and/or Quality Control staff will cite a dollar error (for OI or UI over \$25) when the increases to Gross and Net Income Standards and to the Maximum Excess Shelter and the increase to the Standard Utility allotments are not applied in accordance with this Special Notice.

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